

REVISED DRAFT July 25, 2013

II. Carrizo Area Plan

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Overview

This plan describes County land use policies for the ~~southeastern-southerly~~ portion of the ~~County (refer to Figure 1-1: Carrizo Planning Area)~~. ~~This planning area was formerly a part of the The former Shandon-Carrizo planning area, which area was divided into three different planning areas. The northwest portion which includes rural Shandon is now included as the Shandon-Carrizo sub-area of the in the North County planning aArea Plan. The southwest portion, which includes ,except for the Cuyama Valley, which is now included as the Shandon-Carrizo sub-area of in the South County planning aArea Plan (refer to Figure 1-1: Carrizo Planning Area). The remaining southeastern portion is included in this Carrizo planning aArea Plan.~~

The Carrizo planning area consists of the Carrizo Plain and Rafael/Big Springs watersheds. It is bordered by Kern County to the east, the Cuyama Valley to the south, and the Los Padres National Forest to the west. This area consists of undulating terrain devoted almost exclusively to the agricultural uses of dry farming and rangeland, which traditionally has been the principal industry and the foundation of the rural lifestyle and image of the region.

Most of the population in the Carrizo planning area is located in its one village area: California Valley. The planning area covers a total of 487,316 acres, or 761 square miles. It includes several distinct physiological regions, such as the Temblor Range, where the San Andreas Fault is located; the La Panza Range, and the Carrizo Plain, including Soda Lake.

Specific development “standards” are included in Articles 9 and 10 of the Land Use Ordinance to address special problems and conditions in individual communities and regional planning areas. These include standards for public services, circulation, and land use and provide criteria for detailed evaluation of development projects. The text of this report is for general planning guidance only and is not to be used as a basis for approval or disapproval of development or land division proposals. The policies, programs, text and maps contained in the Carrizo Area Plan shall be used in conjunction with Article 9 the Land Use Ordinance as the basis for approval or disapproval of development or land division proposals. Policies, programs, text, maps, and other information pertaining to the California Valley are contained in the California Valley Village Plan. For all projects, careful reading of the standards in the Land Use Ordinance will assist creating projects that are consistent with adopted policies and regulations.

1.2 Relationship to General Plan

This area plan is part of the Land Use and Circulation Elements (LUCE) of the County General Plan. This plan is consistent with the other elements of the County General Plan. All other County plans, policies, and programs that involve the unincorporated portions of the Carrizo planning area and are subject to the County General Plan are to be consistent with and implement this plan. In addition, where applicable, all public and private development is to be consistent with this plan. It should be recognized, however, that this plan is subject to higher legal authority: for example, federal and state statutes, case law, and regulations.

This plan contains policies and programs for the rural portions of the Carrizo planning area. It also contains regional policies and programs that affect both the rural area and the California Valley village area. Policies, programs, text, maps, and other information specifically pertaining

to the California Valley village area are contained in the Community/Village Plans (LUCE Part III).
| The Community/Village Plans, including any future amendments, are hereby incorporated into the Carrizo Area Plan by reference as though it were fully set forth here.

1.3 Content of the Plan

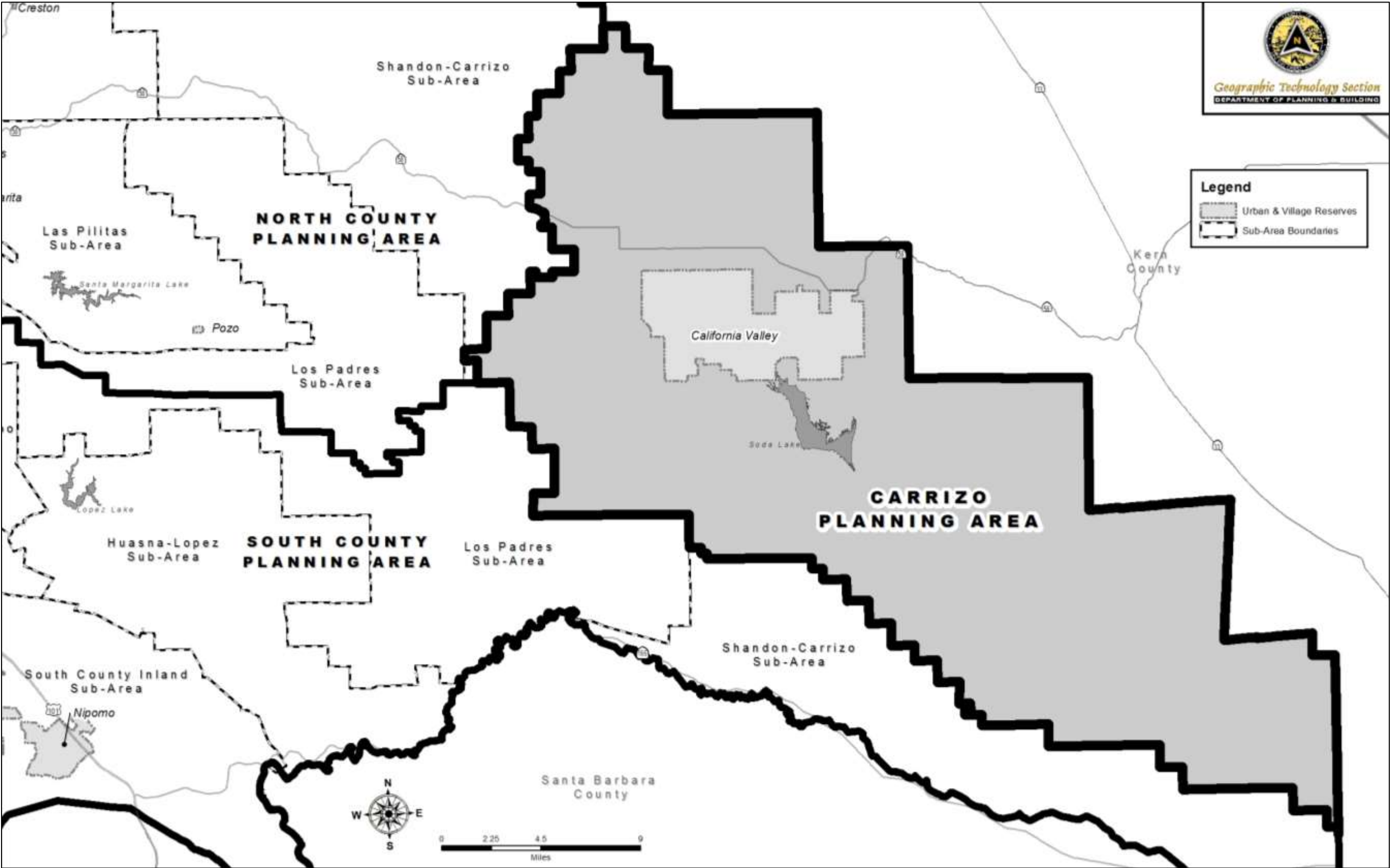
This plan describes population, housing, and economic trends for the Carrizo planning area. It also establishes policies and programs for land use, circulation, public facilities, services, and resources for the rural portions of the planning area, as well as regional policies and programs. All information contained in this plan is taken from the Shandon-Carrizo Area Plan, which was originally adopted on September 22, 1980. Population data was updated in 2012 when the Shandon community plan was separated from the Shandon-Carrizo area plan. Only non-substantive edits have been made to this text for consistent formatting and to reflect the new organization of the LUCE. No changes have been made to reflect current conditions in the Carrizo planning area. Specific time frames or horizons called out in the text (e.g. "...within the next 25 years.") begin in 1980 (the original area plan adoption date), not the adoption date of the LUCE reorganization.

1.4 Planning Area Watersheds

The boundaries of the Carrizo planning area are intended to correspond generally with the Carrizo Plain and Rafael/Big Spring water planning areas (WPAs) (refer to Figure 1-2: Carrizo Water Planning Areas). These watersheds are described in the County's Master Water Plan as follows:

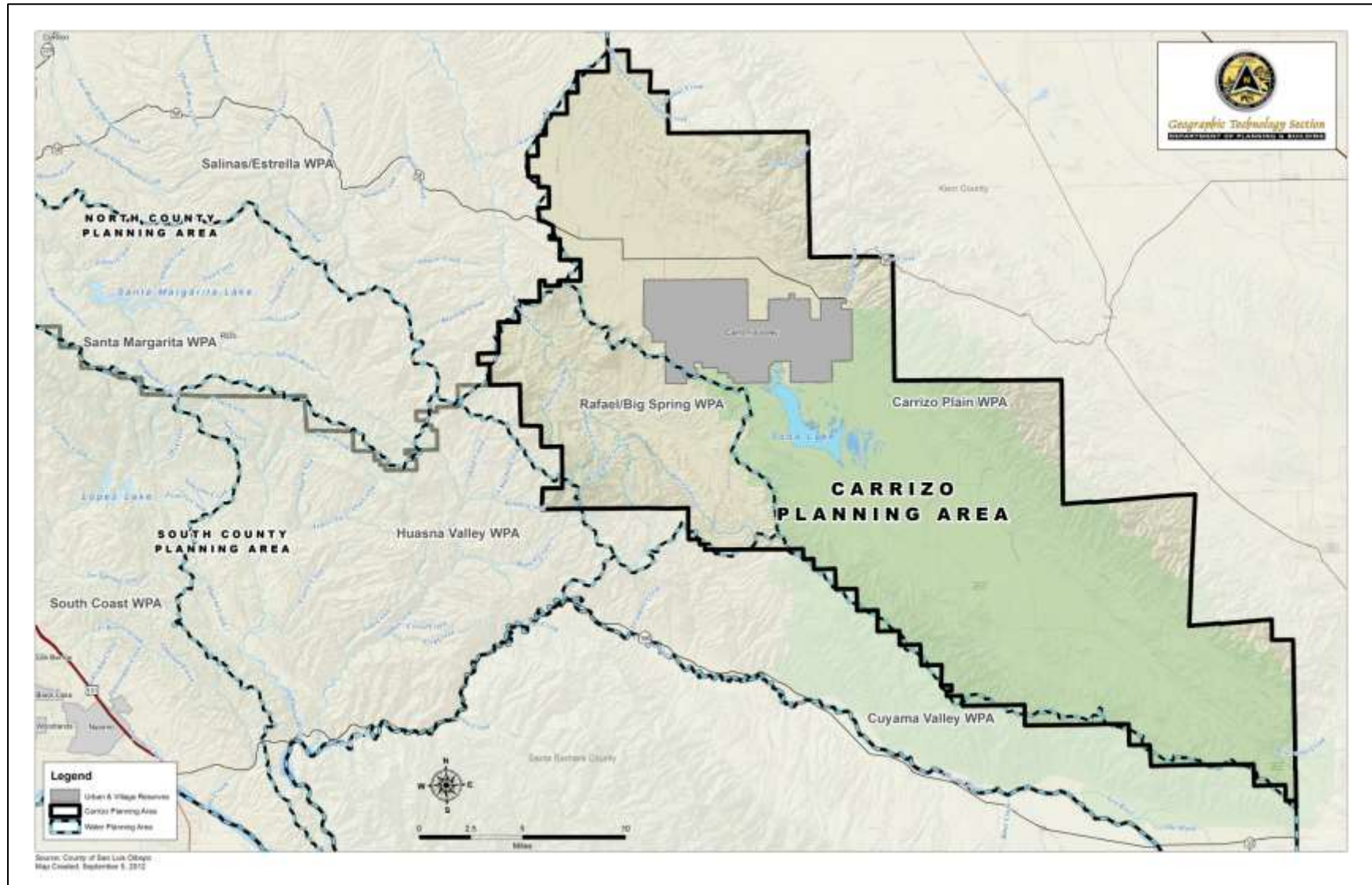
- **Carrizo Plain (WPA 10).** The Carrizo Plain WPA includes agricultural and rural water users, and potentially future solar farms. There are no large population centers with urban water demands in this WPA. The primary groundwater supply is the Carrizo Plain Groundwater Basin. The primary issues in this WPA include water quality and limited groundwater supply.
- **Rafael/Big Spring (WPA 11).** The Rafael/Big Spring WPA includes agricultural and rural water users only. There are no large population centers with urban water demands in this WPA. The primary groundwater supplies are the Rafael and Big Spring Valley Groundwater Basins. The issue in this WPA includes limited available data on the groundwater basin's safe yield.

Figure 1-1: Carrizo Planning Area



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Figure 1-2: Carrizo Planning Area Watersheds



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Chapter 2: Population and Economy

The Carrizo planning area has a population of 490 people.¹ Three-quarters of this population (356 people) is located in the California Valley Village. Population projections and absorption capacity estimates for the Carrizo planning area are found in Appendix A.1, Population and Economy Data.

The Carrizo planning area will likely remain a viable agricultural area because of existing land uses and the prevailing agricultural dedication of the population. The area should experience limited population growth, related only to future increased demands for agricultural labor. The exception to this may be growth in California Valley, which could become a substantial community if services (primarily water) were available and market demand indicated. Only a few dwellings have developed to date, 80% of which are second homes not permanently occupied.

Factors that contribute to the viability of the planning area include: (1) continuing agricultural uses; (2) the rural agricultural environment and large agricultural acreages that discourage suburban residential encroachment; (3) remoteness from populated areas; and (4) surface mining in the Temblor Range, as well as limited oil exploration.

¹ 2010 U.S. Census Bureau

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Chapter 3: Public Facilities, Services, and Resources

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses service and resource concerns that directly affect the Carrizo planning area. The discussion is limited to the rural portion of the planning area only, since the Community/Village Plans cover these topics for the California Valley Village. However, since the resource issue of water availability is fundamentally regional in nature, this plan describes this issue for both the rural area and the California Valley.

3.2 Special Districts

There are no special districts in the rural portion of the Carrizo planning area. The California Valley Village Plan contains information on the California Valley Community Services District.

3.3 Water Supply

An adequate water supply is essential to continuing agricultural development in the Carrizo planning area. Most of the area uses little water in dry farm and grazing operations, but the bottomland acreages suitable for irrigated crops are limited in production by available water supplies. Rainfall alone could be insufficient to sustain types or productivity of crops qualifying as croplands or vineyard and orchards. Consequently, the estimated safe annual yield of the underlying basins might be insufficient to irrigate all lands of otherwise suitable topography and soil.

The current pattern of water supply in the planning area is essentially one of localized groundwater use. Water needs are being met by pumping groundwater in the immediate vicinity of the point of use; there is no extensive transmission of water from point of source to point of use. Barring unforeseen circumstances, continuation of the present economic and agricultural conditions within the planning area is likely.

California Valley may experience water shortages that will inhibit growth if the community develops. Although comprehensive information on water resources is available, future water studies in this area are necessary. Full development of California Valley under this Land Use Element could possibly house as many as 20,000 people on already existing lots. The area would need approximately 3,300 acre-feet of water annually to support such a population. The entire Carrizo Plains area is currently in an overdraft situation. The water quality is poor, sometimes exceeding the U.S. Public Health service recommended limits. Some groundwater obtained in the area is unsuitable for either agricultural or domestic uses. Because of the poor quality and limited water quantity, the only solution for future development would be the importation of supplemental water. However, present estimates of the cost of water, for example, from the state Water Project would most likely be prohibitive. As a result, the future development of California Valley is anticipated to be limited by water availability.

3.4 Sewage Disposal

The entire planning area is served by septic tanks and other individual disposal systems. Soil conditions and large parcel sizes should permit their continued safe use in the rural portions of the planning area.

3.5 Solid Waste Disposal

Successful refuse disposal practices include direct haul by residents and private garbage companies to disposal sites.

3.6 Emergency and Social Services

Police Protection

The entire planning area is serviced by the County Sheriff. Response times are generally poor. The California Highway Patrol also patrols most of the major rural roads.

Fire Protection

Fire protection for the entire Carrizo planning area is provided by the California Division of Forestry (CDF) with fire stations in California Valley-Simmler, La Panza and Cuyama (Santa Barbara County). As is usual with fire protection stations, there are reciprocal firefighting arrangements with Cuyama and Kern County (McKittrick). Rural fire protection is judged to be generally adequate for the future anticipated growth.

Emergency Medical Service

Ambulance service is provided by private ambulance services from Arroyo Grande and Atascadero. Response time is poor, particularly in the southern planning area where roads are poor.

Schools

Most of the planning area is served by the Atascadero Unified School District. The far north end of the planning area falls within the boundaries of the Shandon Unified School District. Bus service is provided to most areas. There is also a junior college in Taft (Kern County), about 40 miles east of California Valley. The schools are presently adequate to serve existing rural agricultural school populations. Future development of existing undeveloped rural subdivisions could lead to overburdened school facilities and require expansion. No future schools are anticipated in the planning area.

Human Services

All human services (mental health, welfare, etc.) are provided outside the planning area.

3.7 Recreation

No recreational areas are presently located in the Carrizo planning area. The larger parcels common in this area are expected to satisfy local resident needs on an individual basis.

Chapter 4: Land Use

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses land use issues affecting only the rural portions of the Carrizo planning area. The Community/Village Plans (LUCE Part III) address land use issues in the California Valley village area.

4.2 Rural Area Distribution of Land Use

The Land Use Element official maps (LUCE Part IV) separate the planning area into land use categories, which define regulations for land uses, density and intensity of use. The programs at the end of this chapter recommend actions by the County or other public agencies to address land use issues in the rural portions of the Carrizo planning area. Article 9 of the Land Use Ordinance (Chapter 22.92) contains development standards related to the land use categories to assist in guiding planning area development. The standards define actions required for private developments to be consistent with the general plan. Table 4-1 summarizes acreages for each land use category in the rural portion of planning area. For land use acreage within the California Valley village area, refer to the California Valley Village Plan (LUCE Part III).

Table 4-1: Land Use Acreage – Carrizo Planning Area	
Land Use Categories	Rural Area
Agriculture	289,092
Rural Lands	162,957
Recreation	0
Open Space	11,182
Residential Rural	0
Residential Suburban	0
Residential Single Family	0
Residential Multi-Family	0
Office and Professional	0
Commercial Retail	1
Commercial Service	1
Industrial	0
Public Facilities	0
Dalidio Ranch	0
Total	463,233

4.3 Rural Land Use Categories

Open Space

Hubbard Hill Freeborn Mountain is designated in the Open Space land use category to emphasize protection of the area in its natural state, and use for passive recreation activities only. No specific plans for use of the area have been formulated except potential acquisition of some of the area by the state. The park would be on BLM property and areas west of it, and would be a natural park with no activities planned other than limited camping, hiking and riding. This potential recreational area has a great diversity of interest. San Juan Creek, a permanent stream, affords recreational possibilities. The mountain slopes are excellent for hiking and riding. Wildlife is abundant, and geology and natural vegetation are of special interest. A spectacular view of the Carrizo Plain is provided from these mountains. The Recreation Analysis of BLM Property in San Luis Obispo County addresses issues involved in acquiring the land, and outlines a work program to establish the recreational area.

Rural Lands

Rural Lands in the Carrizo planning area consist almost solely of rugged chaparral covered terrain or desert. These lands are generally in larger ownership holdings and represent lands used for grazing and watershed uses. Much of the land is owned by the federal government through the BLM. There are several oil well operations in areas near the Kern County line and near larger BLM holdings in the southwest portion of the planning area. Also in the area is a microwave station operated by the U.S. Navy. Many areas contain unique wildlife species and plants, such as the California condor and the San Joaquin kit fox, both on the rare and endangered species list.

Agriculture

Historically, agriculture has been and still is the primary use of land in the planning area. Agricultural practices of varying intensities involve approximately 90% of the planning area. Irrigated production has increased during the last 10 years, particularly vineyards and alfalfa in the north end of the planning area. Dry farming and grazing operations encompass the rest of the agricultural uses. Much of the planning area is within the agricultural preserve program, with parcel sizes ranging from 40 to 640 acres depending on production capability. Continued agricultural production is encouraged, the soil capability of this area is prime farmland if irrigated, and most parcel sizes are sufficiently large to maintain a viable production. Further division of land into parcels less than 40 acres would likely preclude effective farming operations and negatively affect neighboring farms. Their retention in agriculture will prevent premature conversion of adjacent lands due to incompatibility problems, and keep them available for production.

4.4 Land Use Programs

“Programs” are specific, non-mandatory actions or policies recommended by the Land Use Element to achieve community or areawide objectives identified in this area plan. The implementation of each LUE program is the responsibility of the county or other public agency identified in the program itself. Because programs (some of which include special studies) are recommended actions rather than mandatory requirements, implementation of any program by the county should be based on consideration of community needs and substantial community support for the program and its related cost.

The following programs apply to the rural portions of the Carrizo planning area. For a list of programs that apply to the California Valley village area, refer to the California Valley Village Plan.

Areawide

1. **Agricultural Preserves.** The County should continue to encourage owners of eligible lands to participate in the agricultural preserve program.

Recreation

2. **State Acquisition.** The County should work with affected state agencies and property owners toward state acquisition of the Hubbard Hill Freeborn Mountain to provide recreational improvements for camping, hiking and riding, together with an adequate maintenance and security program.

Rural Lands

3. **Public Lands.** Lands in BLM ownership should be retained and administered by the federal government except where property trades are mutually beneficial for consolidating both public and private land holdings.

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Chapter 5: Circulation Element

5.1 Introduction

Land use and transportation planning support each other and need to be closely linked. The planned circulation system – roads, pedestrian routes, bikeways, equestrian trails, and other means of transportation – needs to take into account the planned amount and location of future development. At the same time, planning for future development must consider transportation needs and capacities. Accordingly, this element describes existing and proposed major transportation routes and public facilities that are closely coordinated with the anticipated land use pattern.

Framework for Planning (LUCE Part I), establishes countywide circulation goals and policies. This chapter contains programs to implement those goals and policies in the Carrizo planning area. The Community/Village Plans (LUCE Part III) contain circulation programs for the California Valley village area.

5.2 Road Improvement Projects

The Circulation Element map at the end of this chapter show functional classifications of existing and proposed major roads. Private improvements will be required with proposed land divisions by the Real Property Division Ordinance and planning area standards. No new major roads are proposed in the planning area. The following is a list of road proposals. The order does not imply any priority.

Arterials

Construct minor road improvements on Highway 58 including shoulders and culverts as necessary.

Collectors

Reconstruct Soda Lake Road with an adequate base and repave to rural collector standards.

Local Streets

Existing local streets in developed areas are to have minor improvements and maintenance.

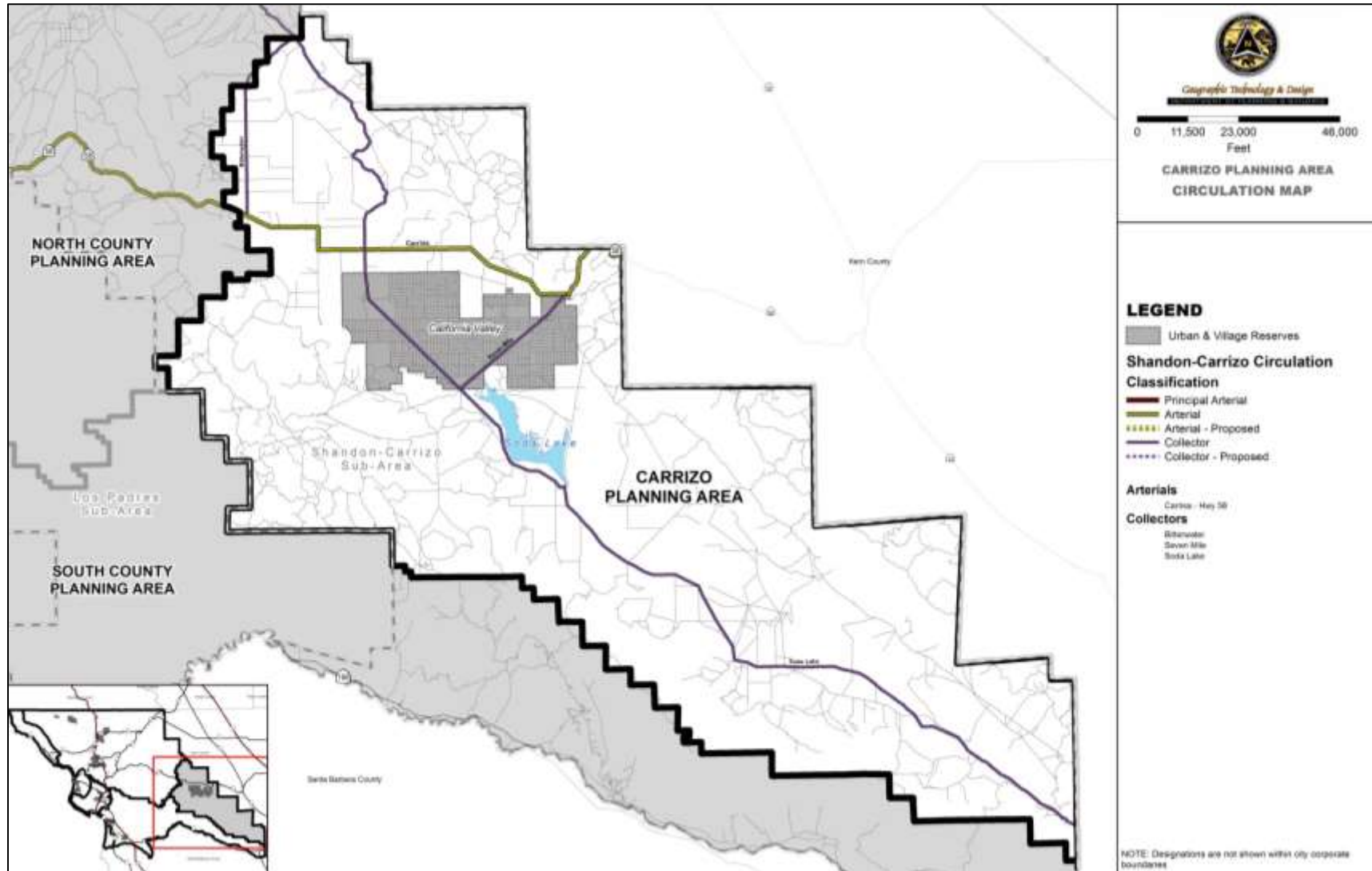
5.3 Other Transportation Modes

Airports

Many large ranches have private airstrips. California Valley Airport is privately operated, with a II-C (general aviation) functional classification. The airport has a 2,500 foot graded runway, is used by local residents, and presently there is little traffic. If future use increases, there is a potential hazard if lots south of the runway or the commercial area to the north were to develop improperly.

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Figure 5-1: Circulation Element Map



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Chapter 6: Combining Designations

6.1 Introduction

Combining designations are special overlay categories applied in areas of the county with hazardous conditions or special resources, where more detailed project review is needed to avoid adverse environmental impacts or effects of hazardous conditions on proposed projects. The following areas are subject to special combining designations. In some cases, specific standards have been adopted for an area where a combining designation is applied. These standards are found in Article 9 of the Land Use Ordinance (Chapter 22.92 - Carrizo Planning Area) and are applicable to development proposals in addition to the standards of Chapter 22.14 (Combining Designation Standards) of the Land Use Ordinance.

6.2 Area Plan Combining Designations

The following combining designations are located within the Carrizo planning area.

1. **Portions of the Temblor Range, Red Hills, Hubbard Hill Freeborn Mountain and Caliente Mountain (GSA).** This designation includes lands with high landslide risk potential, as identified in the Seismic Safety Element.
2. **Cuyama River (FH).** This is a flood plain as shown on the Combining Designations map.
3. **San Andreas Fault Zone (GS) (SRA).** Identified as a Special Studies Zone by the state Geologist under the provisions of the Public Resources Code, the San Andreas fault zone traverses the east county and is one of the most seismically active faults in North America. The fault zone is also important from a botanical and geological standpoint. The area near Poso Ortega Lake has particular interest, with a profusion of spring wildflowers and other plant species as well as several narrow endemics. Because of the scarcity of wetlands in this arid part of the county, the sag ponds along the fault have special ecological significance. The geological features along the fault have national significance due to the extraordinary preservation of the fault trace in the arid climate. Much of the fault zone already has been given agricultural preserve status. Voluntary measures should be taken to protect geological features and to prevent destruction of natural vegetation along the fault zone. The dry beds of the intermittent sag ponds have been cultivated in the past, and some of these small depressions should be set aside as natural areas.
4. **Hubbard Hill Freeborn Mountain (SRA).** These ridges along the westerly border of the Carrizo Plains, include 7,000 acres under Bureau of Land Management control. Diverse native species are found in the area, with no single dominant plant association. The area should be reverted to state ownership, with designation as a state nature preserve. Acquisition of some areas along San Juan Creek by the state or BLM is desirable. BLM is conducting a Wilderness Review of the federally owned land in response to the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976. Development should not interfere with the area's potential status as a wilderness.

5. **Painted Rock (SRA).** Painted Rock is an isolated rock formation which Chumash Indians decorated with unique rock paintings ("pictographs") and "petroglyphs" (figures scratched into rocks). These magnificent rock paintings have almost been entirely vandalized.
6. **Soda Lake (SRA).** This large ephemeral alkaline lake is one of the county's most unusual ecological areas. Filled with water in winter and spring, the lake serves as a key wintering area for sandhill cranes. The surrounding area is included in the general range of endangered wildlife species, the San Joaquin Kit Fox and Blunt Nosed Leopard Lizard. The alkaline conditions in the area support one of the most highly localized plant species in the world, alkaline peppergrass (*Lepidium jaredii*). The lake covers about 13,000 acres, with the central portion administered by the Bureau of Land Management and the fringes in private ownership. Soda Lake should receive designation as a natural area along with appropriate protection.
7. **Caliente National Cooperative Land and Wildlife Management Area (SRA).** The existing preserve includes 58,000 acres of Bureau of Land Management property. This range is considerably different than most areas in the county. There is very little tree cover (occurring primarily on northern slopes), yet this scenic backdrop is one of the most striking in the county. Caliente Mountain, the highest peak in the county at more than 5,100 feet, is located here and is the prominent peak in this outstanding scenic backdrop.

In addition to the rather unique natural values, this area is either partially or entirely within the general range of the California Condor and Blunt Nosed Leopard Lizard, both of which are listed as endangered species, and the San Joaquin Kit Fox, listed as a rare species.

The San Joaquin Kit Fox is naturally restricted to areas of native vegetation including rolling hills, canyons and arid flatland, unsuited to agriculture or urbanization. The California Condor is North America's largest land bird. It is threatened with extinction with about thirty birds remaining in existence.

The Bureau of Land Management is conducting a Wilderness Review of a large portion of the area in response to the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976. BLM will recommend to Congress whether or not the area should be designated a wilderness area after studying it in relation to the Wilderness Act of 1964 and public opinion. Development should only be permitted in accordance with BLM standards authorized by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act.

8. **Temblor Range (SRA).** The Temblor Range is the easternmost mountain range in the county, bordered on the west by the San Andres Fault. The Bureau of Land Management is conducting a wilderness review of the federal lands which are designated as a Sensitive Resource Area. BLM will recommend to Congress whether or not the area should be designated a wilderness area after studying it in relation to the Wilderness Act of 1964 and public opinion. Development should only be permitted in accordance with BLM standards authorized by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976.

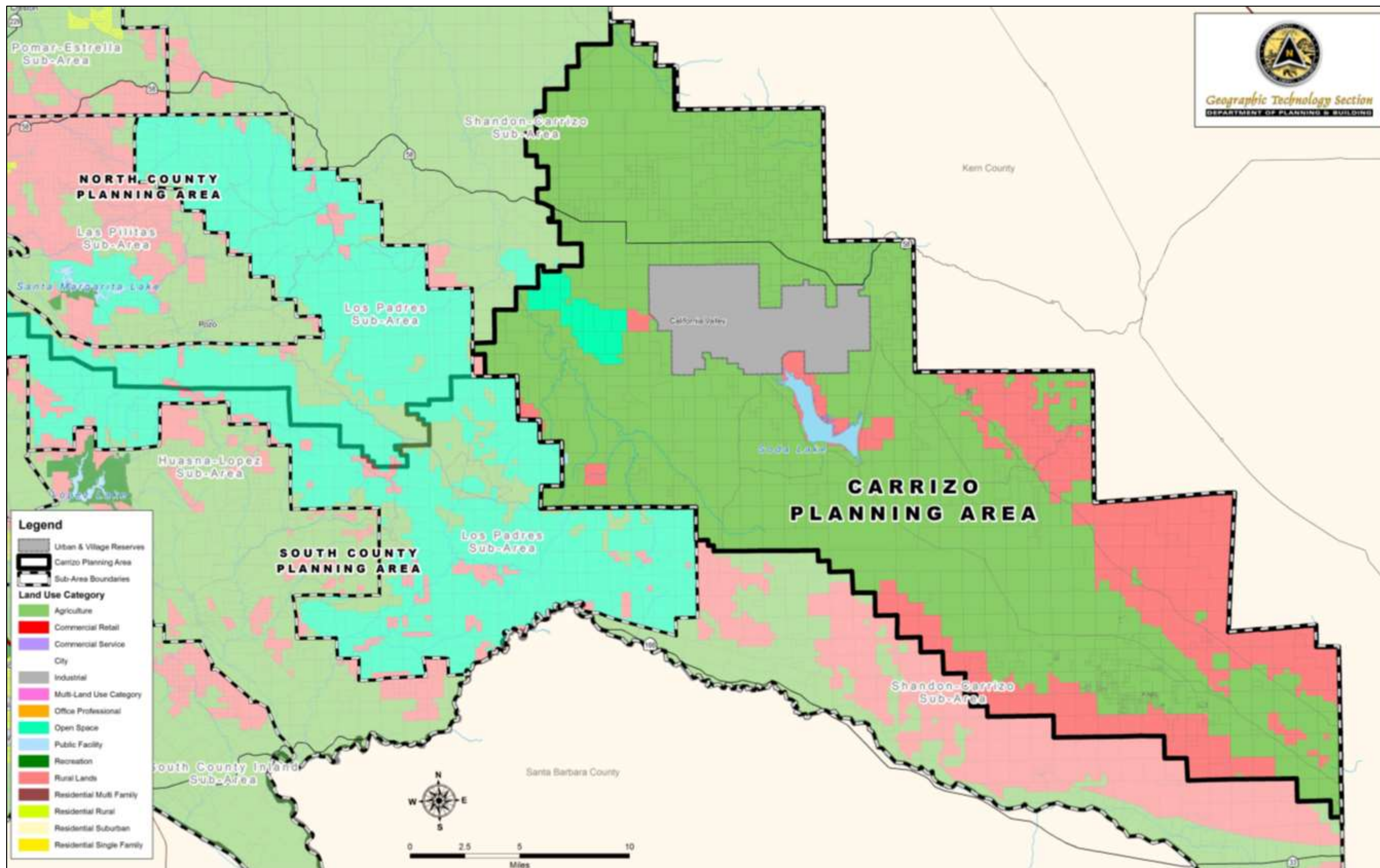
6.3 Combining Designation Programs and Proposed Public Facilities

"Programs" are non-mandatory actions or policies recommended by the Land Use Element to achieve community or areawide objectives identified in this area plan. The implementation of each LUE program is the responsibility of the community, through the county or other public agency identified in the program itself. Because programs (some of which include special studies) are recommended actions rather than mandatory requirements, implementation of any program by the county should be based on consideration of community needs and substantial community support for the program and its related cost.

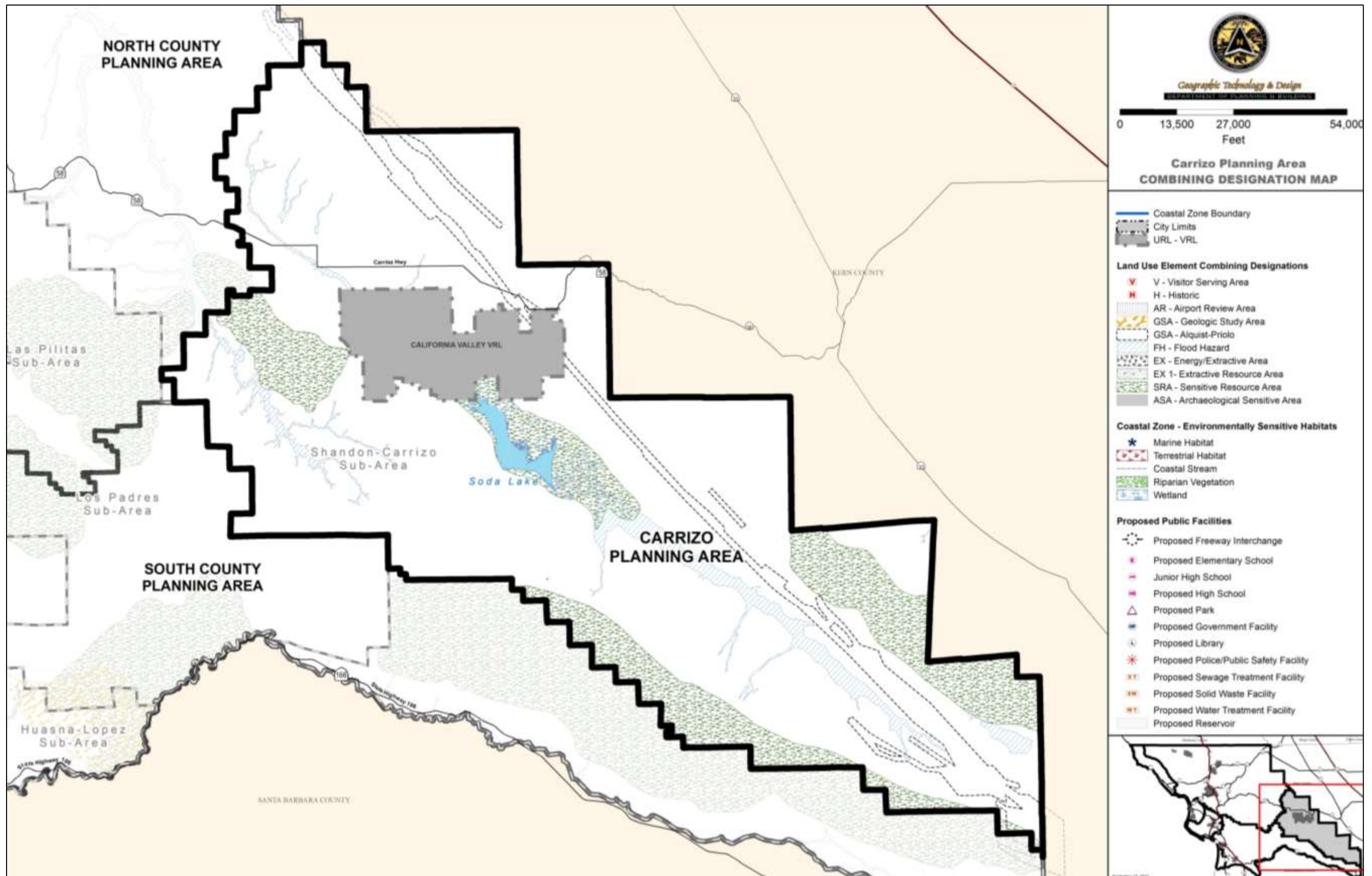
Sensitive Resource Areas

1. **Caliente Wildlife Area.** The county should work with property owners and affected state and federal agencies to prohibit recreational off road vehicles in the Caliente National Cooperative & Wildlife Management Area, except on Bureau of Land Management lands specifically designated for ORV use. Earth berms or other similar barriers in conjunction with drainage ditches should be placed adjacent to public roads to restrict access by off road vehicles.
2. **Hubbard Hill Freeborn Mountain.** At such time as Hubbard Hill and Freeborn Mountain are acquired by the state, the agency having jurisdiction should post adjacent private property and any public right of way leading to the area against trespassers.
3. **Painted Rock.** The county should work with the San Luis Obispo Archeological Society and the owners of Painted Rock to secure the area for prevention of further vandalism and preservation of remaining pictographs and petroglyphs, and to explore potential sources of funding and expertise to support future restoration.
4. **Soda Lake.** The county should work with property owners to initiate a program to restrict recreational off road vehicles from the Soda Lake area by signing and physical barriers

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